

## **Fingers through his hair by Idrab**

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**Summary:** Five times where someone touched Billy Hargrove's hair.

## Fingers through his hair

Billy is eleven years old, and he is sick. Every time he's tried to eat something for the past two days, he's thrown up. Now he's lying in bed under his blankets, shivering with fever and with his eyes closed; not quite sleeping, but not quite awake either.

He feels the bed dip when someone sits down next to him, hears his mom's voice as she starts to hum, and then there's a hand on his head. He feels awful, but her voice and her touch is soothing, so he makes a little noise and turns his head towards her, still without opening his eyes. He imagines the twinkle in her dark eyes, and the smile on her face, as her fingers start carding through his sweat-soaked hair.

"Aw, baby", she says, lovingly.

She stays with him, and she doesn't stop. He falls asleep, eventually, feeling safe and taken care of.

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Billy is thirteen years old, and he refuses to look in the mirror. He's sitting in a chair, with a cape around his neck that feels like it's choking him, and he refuses to look up. If he looks up, he knows what he will see; he will see the barber with his scissors, he will see his father watching him in the mirror, he will see his golden curls fall to the floor, and his own red eyes.

He has cried enough, his father said. No more tears.

His mother is dead, and it's not appropriate for a grieving son to have long hair. Even though she loved his long hair; loved brushing it and running her fingers through it and tugging at it playfully when they were goofing around.

He won't cry.

But as he feels the barber's hands on his head, and the pull of a comb, and hears the scissor close to his ears, his eyes burn.

He won't cry.

But he will, if he looks up. So he keeps his eyes on the floor.

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Billy is fourteen years old, and he's kissing a girl. She's a year older than he is, and he knows her from around, although he hasn't really spoken to her until tonight. She is pretty and has kind eyes and wears a perfume that smells like flowers, and he wants to touch her to see if she feels as soft as she looks, but he doesn't know what to do with his hands.

She leans back and laughs gently at his awkwardness, but puts his hands on her waist, over her red and white dress. She puts her own hands on his shoulders and lock her fingers together loosely behind his neck, before she leans in again and they continue kissing.

He forgot to take a breath, and has to lean back to breathe after a while, but she only smiles at him. Her eyes are dark and beautiful. He smiles back, and then they are kissing again.

Her fingers are playing with the hair at the back of his neck – it's getting longer again – and it sends shivers down his spine.

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Billy is sixteen years old, and he's spitting out blood. His father hits him again, which makes his head spin, and he loses his balance and crashes into the wall. His father is on him before he can fall to the floor, and twists his arm up behind his back; pushing him up against the door.

Billy grimaces, but doesn't say anything. His father does, though. His father has a lot to say. Billy tries to ignore the way his father spits out insults, tries not to listen to words like "useless" and "pathetic" and "disappointment"; words that are designed to hurt more than even the punches. But then his father grabs him by the hair and pulls his head back roughly, and Billy cries out involuntary.

His father's face is red and angry and too close, and he's growling in Billy's ear:

"Are you listening to me, boy?"

Billy doesn't answer fast enough, so his father pulls on his hair again, painfully. Billy has blood in his mouth and he can't swallow with his head bent back like this, and it feels like he's choking. His eyes water and he blinks rapidly to stop the tears from escaping; tears makes it worse, he knows.

"Yes sir", he manages, and holds his breath.

His father watches him intently for a moment, before he nods and slams Billy's head against the wall with such force that Billy's vision goes black at the edges. When he lets go of Billy's hair, Billy crumples to the ground.

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Billy is eighteen years old, and he is happy. He's lying in a bed, naked under the soft covers, with his head resting on the stomach of the most beautiful boy in the world. He has his arms around him, and under the blankets their legs are tangled together.

The other boy smells like *home*, and it's enough to make Billy never want to leave this bed again. There is soft sunshine coming in from the window, and they're warm and lazy and they have the whole day to themselves. They don't have anywhere to be, there's nothing they have to do.

He feels a hand on his head, and he closes his eyes and nuzzles closer. A little laugh, that makes him feel warm all over, and then:

"Oh you like this, do you?"

"Mmm", he says and gently headbutts the hand in his hair.

That startles another laugh out of the other boy, but he obliges and starts running his fingers through Billy's messy curls. Billy damn near purrs.

"You're worse than a cat, honestly."

"You calling me a pussy?"

"Nah, you're a dick."

Billy smiles, but doesn't open his eyes; just enjoys the feeling of the sun, of skin against skin, of a beautiful boy with dark kind eyes playing with his hair.

"Yeah, but I'm your dick."

Another laugh.

"That makes absolutely no sense at all, oh my god."